

1946-1949

The Publications Review Subcommittee was established by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on March 16, 1943. Its function, under the Joint Intelligence Committee, was to "review all papers published and distributed by the intelligence agencies of the War and Navy Departments and make periodic recommendations to the Joint Chiefs of Staff with a view to eliminating duplication and unnecessary reports, and curtailing excessive distribution". The term "all papers" was defined as "all routine periodic or serial reports, all printed documents, and all reports reproduced in more than ten copies;" but in May, 1944, the definition was modified to exclude publications which "(a) have less than 5000 words and/or 20 illustrations, charts, etc., and (b) have a proposed circulation of less than 100 copies". Most of what might be called the standard publications of the departments concerned, (e.g. ONI Review) were also excluded. Of the 234 publications the Publications Review Subcommittee was said to have examined, it claimed to have disapproved only "others".

On the afternoon of January 15, 1946, the Publications Review Subcommittee met and passed a motion recommending that it cease to exist, on grounds that the post-war volume of new and proposed publication did not justify its activities. On February 27, General Weckerling recommended to the Joint Intelligence Committee that the members of the Subcommittee be replaced by more senior officers until such time as the National Intelligence Authority could take over the Subcommittee's functions. The recommendation was accepted. On April 19, the Joint Intelligence Committee pointed out to the Director of Central Intelligence that the

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1. This enclosure is based on material in a folder marked "Publication Review Committee" in Historical Files

functions of the Publications Review Subcommittee came "within the cognizance of the NIA," and proposed that the Central Intelligence Group should assume them at the earliest practicable date.

Admiral Souers replied on May 16, 1946, indicating general agreement and promising to look into the matter further. Soon thereafter (letter in file undated) Souers wrote to the Joint Intelligence Committee: "When approved by the Intelligence Advisory Board, appropriate action will be taken by the Central Intelligence Group to assume the above functions of the Publications Review Subcommittee."

As soon as it appeared that the Group was about to take over the duties of the Publications Review Subcommittee, handling of further details became the business of the Central Planning Staff.¹ On May 6, the Chief of this Staff, Captain Goggins, signed "Planning Directive No. 30" in which he said "it is desirable that NIA, through CIG, assume these functions over intelligence papers issued by State, War, Navy and Air."

Along with Planning Directive No. 30, the Planning Staff drafted "CIG DIRECTIVE NO. ____" which was presumably intended for the signature of the Director. "Under the authority of paragraph 3b of the President's letter of 22 January....and paragraph 3 of NIA Directive No. 1" it prepared to establish a Publications Review Committee "as a permanent operating committee to review all intelligence papers published and distributed by the intelligence agencies of the State, War, and Navy Departments, and to make periodic recommendations to the Intelligence Research Coordination Board with a view to eliminating duplication and unnecessary reports, and curtailing excessive distribution."

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1. For a discussion of the events of the Central Planning Staff, see THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY An Instrument of Government, Chapter III, p. 14

The members of the Committee were to be a representative of each Intelligence Advisory Board Agency plus one each from the Central Planning Staff and the Central Reports Staff of the Central Intelligence Group. The Central Reports member was to be chairman; the Central Planning Staff member would furnish the "Secretariat." The Committee was to "Review all intelligence publications and proposed publications of the Office of Intelligence Coordination and Liaison (State Department), Intelligence Division WDGS, Office of Naval Intelligence, and Assistant Chief of Air Staff-2 originating within the continental United States containing either more than 5,000 words or more than 20 illustrations, charts, etc., and with proposed circulation of more than 100 copies." The Committee would recommend to the "Intelligence Research Coordination Board" papers which should be continued, published jointly, discontinued, or limited in distribution.

It is presumably to this document that "W.A.P." of the Planning Staff is referring in a "Memorandum for Record" dated June 3 which says that the "Review Board" had discussed the draft again and had decided to table it "to await action on papers to be prepared calling for an over-all coordinated committee in the fields of research and collection." On June 26 the Central Planning Staff drew up for General Vandenberg's signature a memorandum for the Intelligence Advisory Board in which the Publications Review plan is described and the Board is asked for approval.

On June 27, 1946, [] of the Planning Staff wrote a "NOTE" which reads as follows: "Action on this paper is suspended, after conference with [] to await decisions on the structure of

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the coordinating system, expected in ten days to two weeks. Whenever such decisions are made, this paper should be immediately reviewed. In its present form it was in process of revision to fit under an Intelligence Research Coordination Board but was not in final form."

Nothing further happened until the ninth of July when another Planning Staff member, [] explained in "Planning Directive No. 30a" that action on a Publications Review Subcommittee would still have to be held in abeyance until the "next informal check on 8 August." This delay was incident to discussion of the "Program for Assuring the Direction, Coordination, and Supervision of Foreign Intelligence Research."

Meanwhile, the Central Planning Staff was being broken up, and its work turned over to the Interdepartmental Coordinating and Planning Staff. Before this happened, however, [] wrote Planning Directive No. 30b in which he brought out a new idea which had presumably been developing while the various memoranda above were being written. Under this plan, the Intelligence Branch of the Central Planning Staff was to prepare a report for the Director in which it would recommend that the problem of the Publications Review Subcommittee be referred to the Office of Dissemination for study and comment.

By August 19--exactly four months after the original proposal--the problem was in the hands of the Office of Dissemination. To Captain Olsen, now head of the Office, the first problem seemed to be which part of his organization should handle the Publications Review Subcommittee. He decided to give the job to the "Survey Division of the Survey and Control

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Branch of the Office of Dissemination" because he considered that the stated functions of the Branch fitted the case. ("Surveys the inter-departmental dissemination of intelligence by all government agencies and makes appropriate recommendations to insure adequacy and eliminate duplication.") The Survey Division was not yet equipped for the task, however, and probably would not be until the first of November. On recommendation of the Chief, Interdepartmental Coordinating and Planning Staff, therefore, General Wright (the Deputy Director) agreed to "suspension" of the Subcommittee problem until November 1. By October 17, Olsen had discovered that November 1 would have to become November 15. On December 19, the Office of Dissemination was still understaffed, so that nothing further could be done until a "progress check" of February 10, 1947.

On January 29, Olsen had a new idea for publications review. Since the National Intelligence Authority had broader authority than the Joint Intelligence Committee, the review function of Central Intelligence should be similarly broadened with respect to publication review. He therefore wrote a memorandum to Donald Edgar, Chief of the Planning Staff, saying that the new Publications Review Subcommittee "should inquire into all intelligence publications issued by Federal Agencies, limited only by practical considerations in the matter of size and circulation." Though Edgar seemed to agree with Olsen as to the scope of the review function, he did not even reply to Olsen's letter. Instead, he wrote a memorandum to the Assistant Director, Office of Reports and Estimates, in which he said among other things: "...Since the reviewing of these publications

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is considered to be a function of ORE, your comments are desired..." The Assistant Director (Huddle) answered to the effect that this was really a function of Dissemination and that if his Office participated, it should be concerned only in the "substantive" aspects.

By this time the Interdepartmental Coordinating and Planning Staff seems to have prepared a new "Draft Directive" designed to effect the transfer of the Publications Review Subcommittee. The document itself is missing, but some comments on it exist. It is apparent from these that the strain between the Central Intelligence Group and the Agencies had by this time developed to the point where proposals for any real centralizing of authority were not met with equanimity. "This," wrote someone who signed the initial "B" is "another case of negative action-- a prohibition, a restriction imposed by the Central Intelligence Group on agency activities. When we have proven, by production, our worth, let's then eliminate duplication. Therefore, I don't believe this has a Chinaman's chance with the Intelligence Advisory Board." "Concur in objectives," writes 'H.C.S.' but don't believe we can make it effective under existing circumstances. It also appears to me that implementation of the directive should be a joint responsibility of OCD and ORE." "D.E." writes: "This is not the time to bring this up. ORE should handle review of material when we get to that point." S.G.'s comment is: "I think this is quicksand at the present time."

On March 25, recommended further delay in the project because of "a number of factors still in the uncertain stage." There is a new "Draft Directive" dated April 25 (revised to no effect

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on May 2) providing for the setting up of an interagency Publications Review Board. It is obvious that no one took any action on this Directive. Meanwhile (undated) a member of the Planning Staff had suggested that the "Centralized Reading Center" "be saddled with this responsibility," and the Chief had agreed.

While all this had been going on, and while the Office of Reports and Estimates had been trying to dodge responsibility for publications review, Captain Olsen was still waiting for a reply to his proposal of January 29. On the first of May, 1947 he wrote to Edgar concerning his January communication, saying that "no information has been received to date of any action thereon. It is requested that the Office of Collection and Dissemination be informed of the present status of the study." Edgar's answer to Olsen's request is dated May 2, and begins, "It has been the policy of the Director that no action should be taken by CIG in any matters affecting its relationship to JIC and the JIS pending Congressional consideration of the Merger Bill. Accordingly, ICAPS has suspended all positive action related to the ..., Publications Review Subcommittee." Edgar also explained in this memorandum (apparently Olsen's first official knowledge of the fact) that if the Group acquired the Publications Review Subcommittee, the Office of Collection and Dissemination would share responsibility with the Office of Reports and Estimates--the former to be in an "advisory" capacity.

Mr. Huddle for Reports and Estimates commented again May 13 on the proposed part of his Office in reviewing publications. According to Huddle, the Review problem fell into two parts--or "phases" as he called them. The first was simply exchange of information to the end

that each agency would know what the other was doing and planning to do--a means in other words of stopping duplication at its source. The other function was that of keeping an eye on publications already in existence to see that they were necessary and properly distributed. The latter function, so far as the Office of Reports and Estimates was concerned, belonged strictly to the Office of Collection and Dissemination.

The Interdepartmental Coordinating and Planning Staff mullied over Huddle's memorandum. "A.W.", completely ignoring the first "phase" maintained that "only ORE can decide whether any publication will fill the bill." Quite to the contrary, "J.E.R." commented: "I still miss ORE connection to main subject when we have "Requirements" and "Dissemination" in OCD. I concur with paragraph 2 of J.K.H. memo of 13 May. Don't understand paragraph 1." "E" added as his comment: "I don't understand paragraph 1 either but still maintain there is a joint responsibility between OCD and ORE." Thus, of three representatives, (two of whom professed not to understand Huddle's modest suggestion about interagency exchange) one thought Review belonged to the Office of Reports and Estimates, another to the Office of Collection and Dissemination, and the third to both offices jointly.

Actually, the question was somewhat academic as the Publications Review function was still in the Joint Intelligence Committee. By October, the Interdepartmental Coordinating and Planning Staff had before it another Draft Memorandum, addressed to the members of the Intelligence

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Advisory Committee, which proposed once more that "the Central Intelligence Agency assume the functions of the Publications Review Subcommittee." This time, the proposal was simply that the present membership of the Publications Review Subcommittee be transferred to the Central Intelligence Agency and that a Central Intelligence Agency member be added to act as chairman. The two comments on this proposal amount to the same thing: that the new committee should somehow be made part of the "Interdepartmental Intelligence Production Program," then evidently under discussion.

On October 28, the Interdepartmental Coordinating and Planning Staff completed a draft proposal for an Interdepartmental Intelligence Production Program according to which the Director would call on each member of the Intelligence Advisory Committee to present detailed statements on internal requirements within his Agency, internal production schedule, and similar departmental information. Paragraph 10 of this document mentions that "consideration is being given to the proposal previously made by the Joint Intelligence Committee that the Central Intelligence Agency assume the functions of the Publications Review Subcommittee." Evidently, this document never got beyond the proposal stage. Another draft, dated January 12, 1948, supersedes that of October, but though it is shortened from twelve to seven paragraphs, it manages to say the same thing as the first draft.

Here, the file on the Publications Review Subcommittee comes to an end. Twenty-one months had passed since the original request for a

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transfer; much time and effort had been consumed in thought, conference, and literary composition; yet in January, 1948 the Publications Review Subcommittee project was exactly where it had been in June, 1946.

The original purpose of the Publications Review Staff, as instituted by the Joint Chiefs, was probably to keep down the irresponsible creation of printed publications, primarily of the periodical type. For military intelligence at the time, the idea was doubtless a good one. Much more important, however, with respect to the realities of central intelligence was what Huddle had perceived--the need of assuring free inter-agency exchange of information about projects planned or in being.

The last effort to create a working equivalent of the Publications Review Subcommittee was made on October 5, 1949 when the Assistant Director for Reports and Estimates called a meeting of agency heads to discuss, among other things, exchange of project information. All those attending were strongly in favor of a free and full exchange of information on work being done, but declined to make any commitments on the subject. The State representative said that project information was sent out in the form of a monthly bulletin but conceded that this document was of no practical use. The military representatives maintained that most of their work was of such a rush nature that there was no time to give advance notice of it.¹ None of the Agencies would commit themselves to doing any more than they were doing.

The same points are brought out more forcefully in a proposed plan dated October 20, 1949 under which the Director would evidently have

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1. See stenographic record in files of Assistant Director,
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brought the issue of inter-agency coordination before the National Security Council. Paragraphs 5 and 6 read:

"5. Although NSCID Number 3 provides for exchange of information between CIA and the IAC agencies on projects and plans for staff intelligence, this provision is honored by the IAC agencies mainly in the breach. CIA therefore cannot effectively plan intelligence production".

"6. The IAC agencies are producing intelligence for themselves or other departments which CIA should, but rarely does, receive. This is a clear evasion of the law. The IAC agencies take the position that while they will inform us of intelligence work being produced on their own initiative, they will withhold information produced by request or direction on the ground that the latter is a matter under the control of the requesting or directing authority. Most projects fall into the latter category".